



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Events Surrounding "Strategy 31" Protests in the Russian Federation

As delivered by Charge d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 3, 2011

The United States is concerned by reports that dozens of people were detained in Moscow and other cities around Russia in connection with "Strategy 31" demonstrations January 31. Authorities arrested citizens seeking to exercise their right to peaceful assembly and some who were not even participating in the demonstration. We are concerned by reports that those detained were mistreated, including accusations of beatings of protestors by police.

The United States is also concerned by the raid and criminal investigation launched over the weekend against the organizers and activists of the Strategy 31 campaign, which conducts peaceful rallies in support of the right to free assembly. These steps amount to intimidation of those who choose to exercise their fundamental rights as citizens, enshrined in the Russian constitution and in its international commitments.

These actions run counter to President Medvedev's recent assertions about the need to widen the political space, and they threaten those championing aspirations that are common to all people. We urge the Russian government to safeguard the fundamental freedoms of expression and assembly for all citizens.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.